Apprentice and trainee outcomes
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How to interpret survey results

Apprentice and trainee outcomes 2021 provides a summary of the outcomes and satisfaction of apprentices and trainees aged 18 years and over who completed an apprenticeship or traineeship during 2020, with the data collected in mid-2021. The 2021 figures are derived from apprentices' and trainees' responses to the National Student Outcomes Survey (SOS).

The sample for the National Student Outcomes Survey was selected from the National VET Provider and National VET in Schools collections for apprentices and trainees who undertook off-the-job training in 2020.

Survey responses are weighted to population benchmarks in the National Apprentice and Trainee Collection (collection number 108, June 2021 estimates). As the estimates from the National Student Outcomes Survey are based on information provided by a sample rather than on a population, they are subject to sampling variability; that is, they may differ from the statistics that would have been produced had all students been included and responded to the survey.

How close the estimate is likely to be to the true population value is reflected in the confidence interval. The confidence interval can be calculated for any confidence level, but usually a level of 90%, 95%, or 99% is used. For this publication we use a confidence level of 95%, which means the probability that the confidence interval contains the true population value is 95%.

The confidence interval can be shown graphically using a black bar around the estimate (see figure A). Smaller bars correspond to more accurate estimates. The confidence interval is sometimes expressed as *Estimate +/- margin of error*. That is, the margin of error is half the width of the confidence interval. For example, in figure B, *Estimate A* is equal to 70% and the margin of error (using a confidence level of 95%) is 5%. The confidence interval for this estimate is 65% to 75%, which means we can be 95% confident the true value is between 65% and 75%.

It is important to consider the margin of error when making comparisons between groups and years, particularly when the results are close. Data users are encouraged to use the margin of error to determine if a difference between groups is statistically significant. The margin of error is available for all estimates presented in the DataBuilder.

In figure B, the black bars for *Estimate A* and *Estimate B* do not overlap. This means that it **can** be concluded with a 95% level of confidence that there is a difference between *Estimate A* and *Estimate B*. However, the error bars for *Estimate B* and *Estimate C* do overlap. This means that it **cannot** be concluded with a 95% level of confidence that there is a difference between *Estimate B* and *Estimate C*. It also cannot be concluded that *Estimate B* and *Estimate C* are similar, and further testing needs to be undertaken to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the estimates.

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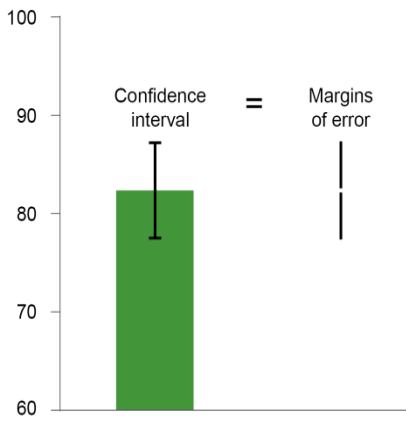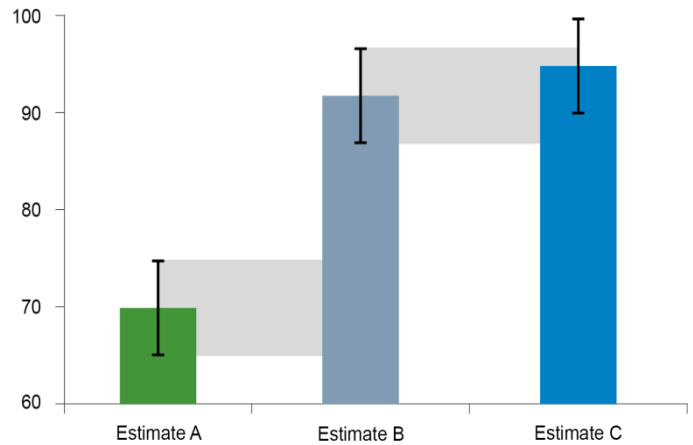**Figure A   Confidence interval and margins of error**

Figure B   Confidence intervals

For further technical details about the Apprentice and trainee component of the National Student Outcomes Survey, please refer to the technical notes supporting document at <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/apprentice-and-trainee-outcomes-2021>.